Amendments to the Claims

Deleted matter is indicated by strikethrough or double brackets, and added matter is indicated by underlining.

What is claimed is:

1. (Currently Amended) An aluminum pigment, which is at least partially coated with a lubricant, characterized in that said aluminum pigment has

a) a water coverage between 40,000 and 130,000 cm^2/g,

b) a mean thickness h of less than 100 to 30 nm as calculated from the water coverage and the h_{50} value as determined from the cumulative breakthrough curve of a scanning electron microscope thickness count,

c) as determined by a scanning electron microscope thickness count, a relative width of the distribution of thicknesses Δh of from 70 % to 140 %, as calculated on the basis of the corresponding cumulative breakthrough curve of the relative frequencies of occurrence, according to the formula

$$\Delta h = 100 \text{ x } \frac{h_{90}-h_{10}}{h_{50}},$$

d) an aspect ratio d_{50}/h of more than 200, and

e) a roughness value of from 0.30 to 0.9, as calculated from the specific surface area as determined by the BET test method and the water coverage, according to the formula:

BET value/2 x water coverage.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1, characterized in that said aluminum pigment has, as determined by a scanning electron microscope thickness count, a relative width of the distribution of thicknesses Δh of from 75 % to 120 %, as calculated on the basis of the corresponding cumulative breakthrough curve of the relative frequencies of occurrence according to the formula $\Delta h = 100 \text{ x } \frac{h_{90}-h_{10}}{h_{50}}$.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of the previous claims~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment has an aspect ratio d_{50}/h of more than 220.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of the previous claims~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment has a roughness value, calculated from the specific surface area, as determined by the BET test method, and the water coverage, according to the following formula: BET value/2 x water coverage of 0.35 to 0.9.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of the previous claims~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment is at least partially coated with a fatty acid as lubricant.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of the previous claims~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment is at least partially coated with stearic acid as lubricant.

7. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment is at least partially coated with oleic acid as lubricant.

8. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment is at least partially coated with a mixture of stearic acid and oleic acid as lubricant.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 5~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment is at least partially coated with a phosphonic acid, a phosphoric acid ester or a mixture thereof as lubricant.

10. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of the previous claims~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment is coated with a passivating inhibitor or anti-corrosion layer.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 10, characterized in that said passivating inhibitor layer comprises corrosion inhibiting organic phosphonic acids ~~and/~~or phosphoric acid esters, functional organic silanes, aliphatic or cyclic amines, aliphatic or aromatic nitro compounds, oxygen-, sulfur- ~~and/~~or nitrogen-containing heterocyclics, sulfur- ~~and/~~or nitrogen-containing higher ketones, aldehydes and alcohols, thiols, β-ketoesters, β-diketones, or mixtures thereof.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 10, characterized in that said passivating anti-corrosion layer comprises silicon oxide, zirconium oxide, aluminum oxide, chromium oxide, polymerized plastic resins, vanadium oxides, molybdenum oxides ~~and/~~or peroxides, phosphates, phosphites, borates or mixtures thereof.

13. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 10, characterized in that said passivating anti-corrosion layer comprises silicon dioxide~~, where the silicon dioxide surface is preferably coated with silanes~~.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 9~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment has been oxidized by water in an aqueous chemical process and said aluminum pigment has modified color.

15. (Currently Amended) ~~An~~ The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of the previous claims~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment is a powder~~, preferably non-dusting powder,~~ or a compacted form~~, preferably a paste, granules, or pellets~~.

16. (Currently Amended) A process for the production of a pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 15~~, comprising the following step: a) milling of aluminum

particles to an aluminum pigment within a milling device in the presence of solvent, lubricants and milling media having an individual weight of from 2 to 13 mg, over a time period between 15 and 72 hours.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as defined in claim 16, characterized in that said milling media have an individual weight of from 5.0 to 12 mg.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as defined in claim 16 ~~or 17~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment is subjected to a size classification in an additional step b).

19. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as defined in claim 16 ~~any one of claims 16 to 18~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment prepared in step a) or step b) is converted to a compacted form~~, preferably a paste, granules, or pellets~~.

20. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as defined in claim 16 ~~any one of claims 16 to 18~~, characterized in that said aluminum pigment prepared in step a) or step b) is converted to powdered aluminum~~, preferably non-dusting aluminum powder~~.

21. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as defined in claim 16 ~~any one of claims 16 to 20~~, characterized in that the solvent used is an organic solvent~~, preferably white spirit, solvent naphtha, isopropanol, an alcohol, a ketone, or a mixture thereof~~.

22. (Currently Amended) ~~A~~ The process as defined in claim 16 ~~any one of claims 16 to 21~~, characterized in that the solvent used is water and the lubricant used is selected from the group consisting of an organic phosphonic acid, an ~~and/or~~ ester thereof, ~~and/or~~ a phosphoric acid, an ~~and/or~~ ester thereof, and mixtures thereof.

23. (Cancelled).

24. (Cancelled).

25. (Currently Amended) A nail varnish composition, characterized in that said nail varnish contains an aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1 ~~any one of claims 1 to 15~~.

26. (Currently Amended) A water based paint composition, characterized in that said water based paint contains an aluminum pigment as defined in claim 9 ~~any one of claims 9 to 14~~.

27. (New) A coating composition comprising the aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1.

28. (New) A paint composition comprising the aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1.

29. (New) A printing ink composition comprising the aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1.

30. (New) A powder coating composition comprising the aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1.

31. (New) A plastic composition comprising the aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1.

32. (New) A security printing ink composition comprising the aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1.

33. (New) A ceramic composition comprising the aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1.

34. (New) A cosmetic formulation composition comprising the aluminum pigment as defined in claim 1.

35. (New) A water-based paint composition comprising the aluminum pigment of claim 10.

36. (New) A coating composition for exterior applications comprising the aluminum pigment of claim 10.

37. (New) The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 13, wherein the silicon dioxide surface is coated with silanes.

38. (New) The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 15, wherein said aluminum pigment is a non-dusting powder.

39. (New) The aluminum pigment as defined in claim 15, wherein said compacted form is a paste, granules, or pellets.

40. (New) The process as defined in claim 19, wherein the compacted form is a paste, granules, or pellets.

41. (New) The process as defined in claim 20, wherein the powdered aluminum is a non-dusting aluminum powder.

42. (New) The process as defined in claim 21, wherein the organic solvent comprises white spirit, solvent naphtha, isopropanol, an alcohol, a ketone, or a mixture thereof.